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WHITE LIBERALS, BLACK SCHOOLS

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NEWS AND VIEWS

Many New Yorkers think the state's Catholic bishops are signalling their support for Nelson Rockefeller in his struggle with Frank O'Connor for the governorship.

Omen one: Rockefeller was the only layman and only politician to speak at the anniversary dinner of St. Joseph's College in Brooklyn. Archbishop McEntegart of Brooklyn and Father Robert Gannon, ex-president of Fordham, also spoke. O'Connor was not invited.

Omen two: O'Connor was conspicuously non-invited to speak at Cardinal Spellman's annual Alfred E. Smith dinner, an important political occasion in New York, although the speeches are supposed to be non-political. The speakers will be Nixon, Lindsay and Rockefeller.

In his New York *Post* column of October 4, Murray Kempton wrote: "As George Spitz has said, there appear to be two rehabilitation projects going on in the campaign—Alex Rose's [of the Liberal Party] for Franklin Roosevelt [Liberal nominee for governor] and the Cardinal's for Nelson Rockefeller."

Kempton continued: "The bishops have never been much of a resource for any Catholic with ambitions for a general office. The one clear case of separation between church and state in this country is the cleavage between the hierarchy and the Catholic politician . . . The great institution which [the Cardinal] commands has its needs and they have been more securely and more agreeably served by a Protestant governor than they could have been by a Catholic one. It would have been very tough for a Catholic governor to spend state money for scholarships for diocesan colleges or textbooks for parochial schools."

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Msgr. Loris Capovilla, secretary to Pope John XXIII has denied that the late Pope wrote a prayer (attributed to him a year and a half ago in *Commentary* magazine) confessing Christian guilt for persecution of the Jews. It's a beautiful prayer, and we'd like to believe John actually wrote it, but *Commentary's* source for the prayer is "F.E. Cartus," alias "Michael Serafian," author of *The Pilgrim*. Hmmm.

•

The build-up of American troops in Vietnam:

End of 1961	2,000
End of 1962	11,000
End of 1963	15,500
End of 1964	23,000
End of 1965	181,000
End of 1966	360,000-380,000
Estimated later	500,000-600,000

The doubling of our forces in Vietnam is expected to begin immediately after the fall elections here. An analysis by a military institute in Washington showed that on the basis of some 675,000 Americans in Vietnam, the war would probably last six years, with about 100,000 casualties.

•

Further Adventures of Father Berrigan in Paradise:

Msgr. Timothy Flynn, former Information Director for the New York Chancery and now pastor of Holy Family Church (near the U.N.) approved an idea, from the Catholic Peace Fellowship, that a peace Mass be said at his church Oct. 4, to mark the anniversary of Pope Paul's visit to the U.N., then cancelled the Mass when he learned the celebrant would be Father Berrigan, a sponsor of the Fellowship. "He's very controversial," said Msgr. Flynn, and besides, the Fellowship-sponsored Mass would "confuse things" on the day's calendar of Holy Family.

Instead of the Mass (since no one could think of a substitute Manhattan pastor who might have been sympathetic to a peace Mass) a joint service (plus a meal of reconciliation and a vigil at the U.N.) was planned with the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. An ad was phoned in to the New York *Catholic News* and accepted, but did not appear. When phoned for an explanation, the *News* said it did not accept political ads. It was pointed out to the *News* that the ad had not mentioned Vietnam and that the vigil was to be in behalf of peace, and not any specific political way of achieving it. No dice.

Instead of the ad, a news item appeared: "Francis Cardinal Spellman will preside at a Pontifical Mass on October 4 commemorating Pope Paul's visit . . . The Mass will be offered at Holy Family Church in Manhattan."

•

Two new controversies involve Chicago Archbishop John P. Cody, both of them rising out of the charge that growing centralization at the chancery office is unreasonably restricting freedom of priests.

1) The pastor of St. Dorothy's parish in a Negro area on the South Side approved the use of parish facilities for a SNCC meeting. The Archbishop canceled the meeting and newsmen were told that SNCC would not be allowed to use archdiocesan facilities at any time. SNCC issued an angry press release claiming it had been "stabbed in the back" by a white Archbishop overruling a Negro priest.

2) On September 21, the Archbishop issued a decree ordering all administrators of Catholic parishes and institutions to get his permission before allowing a non-Chicago priest to come in—either to take up temporary residence or to fulfill any commitment, be it pastoral, executive, academic or fund-raising. A group of teachers at Chicago-area Catholic colleges have circulated a statement of protest, arguing that the decree consitutes a serious breach of academic freedom at their colleges, since it would mean that the chancery would control invitations to priest-lecturers and academic gatherings involving priest-scholars coming from outside the area. Some months ago, the Archbishop did try to cancel such a gathering (of world-famous theologians) at St. Xavier University, but backed off after a wave of protest.

JOHN LEO

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CORRESPONDENCE

"Empty Verbiage"

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: I've hesitated about answering the nonsensical bit of empty verbiage which Blaise Opulente [letter, Sept. 16] again echoes from his master, Father Tinnelly, namely: "No teacher was 'summarily dismissed' last December" from St. John's University. At least 21 of the December letters of termination state that the teachers "are relieved of all functions, duties, and responsibilities including teaching assignments effective immediately." Very few exegetes are penetrating enough to discover that those words don't mean *summarily dismissed*!

For example, when the American Association of University Professors' Committee A, after meticulous investigation, recommended the censure of St. John's University (which censure was imposed at the national AAUP meeting), amongst other things it stated: "None of these 21 was informed why he was *suspended and dismissed,* and none was permitted even the most rudimentary elements of academic due process."

Likewise, in the very report that Opulente quotes from, but in a passage he was programmed not to mention, Middle States Association's Commission says: "However, the Commission would not wish its silence to be interpreted as meaning that it condones the unprecedented de facto *suspension* of a considerable number of faculty members without charges or specifications. Quite the contrary . . . the Commission regards it as reprehensible."

Not only the location of this overlooked passage, which is right between the two passages quoted by Opulente, but also the place his second passage stops, makes us wonder whether well-programmed robots don't after all make more dependable executive vice presidents than men, who are always susceptible to having ideas of their own or taking a look at things on their own. Actually where his quotation left off,

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ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY

The trouble with offering too many and too varied a batch of arguments for America's continued intervention in Vietnam is that they may cancel each other out. The result could be that no one will quite know what consistent sense, if any, there is in the Administration's commitment to the war. There is the argument about honoring our pledges, the argument about supporting South Vietnamese independence and self-determination, the argument about stopping Communist aggression, the argument about falling dominoes, the argument about American prestige being on the line. In other words, there is an argument to suit every taste: jingoists can hang on the prestige line, liberals on the self-determination theme, conservatives on the falling domino theory, and diplomatic formalists on the honoring of commitments. There is something for everyone; everyone except the person looking for a single, consistent thread in the Administration's defense of its actions. That creates one problem.

A second and equally baffling problem lies in trying to find a single, consistent thread in the Administration's quest for peace. At the very least, the prospect for a negotiated peace will require three things. First, it will require a genuine willingness on the part of the United States to accept a negotiated peace. And that means, practically speaking, the willingness to accept some compromises. Second, it will require a similar willingness on the part of the Vietcong and North Vietnam. Third, it will require that one side or the other be willing to take an initial unilateral step. To listen to Administration accounts of its efforts, one could easily gather that it has fulfilled the first and third conditions, and that only the second (over which it has no control) has been lacking. This assertion is initially plausible from the evidence: the U.S. has on two occasions halted bombing raids in the North as a token of good faith while, at the same time, affirming its willingness to sit down and talk. Most recently, Ambassador Goldberg took still another initiative in the U.N., reiterating once again an American willingness to de-escalate the war as a first step.

But this evidence, as convincing as it may seem to the American people,

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may in fact appear highly ambiguous to the Vietcong and North Vietnamese, as well as to many friendly nations. French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, for instance, has told President Johnson that his government finds the stated conditions for peace vague. There has been no official response to this charge, apparently because the Administration wants to be vague at this point. From the viewpoint of effective bargaining this tactic may make sense; no one wants to put all his cards on the table before the game begins. But since a major problem at this point is to convince our friends and enemies of the credibility of our quest for peace, it is a strategy which has been singularly unproductive. Few there are in the world who have an absolute certainty that the United States can be trusted.

There is still another source for America's lack of full credibility. Again and again it has been stated that the U.S. is ready to halt the bombing of North Vietnam as a first step. But consider the conditions under which the first two moratoriums took place: the bombings were halted but the flow of men and material continued unabated.

In this way was a mixed signal flashed to the North Vietnamese: the bombings will stop but, for the rest, we will continue to build up troops and facilities as if nothing whatever was about to change. No doubt the American strategy was to indicate that the U.S. was fully prepared to continue the war if there was no response to the cessation of bombing. But how could the North Vietnamese possibly know for certain that the bombing gesture was anything but a trap? They couldn't, and they had the U.S. troop movements during the bombing lull to confirm their fears.

If the U.S. is to maintain a credible posture, this much is necessary: 1) a spelling out in some detail of what results the U.S. is willing to accept as the outcome of peace talks; 2) an immediate halt to air raids in the North, only this time backed up by a halt to all offensive ground actions, a halt to the movement by sea and air of fresh troops beyond the number now present, and a halt to the increment of weapons, planes, and other military supplies beyond the present quantity. In brief, a clear, consistent message, in word and deed, must be conveyed to the North.

BOMBERS FOR PORTUGAL

The Central Intelligence Agency, it has been suggested, is actually an invaluable instrument of education—informing the American people of the realities of their own government's foreign policy. A case in point: the current trial of two men for illegally flying seven B-26 bombers to Portugal (ostensibly, so that Portugal could use them against rebels in Angola and Mozambique). The accused insist that the exporting of the planes was done with the cooperation of the C.I.A. The C.I.A. (surprise!) denies this.

Thus far testimony has included a statement by a former consultant to several U.S. intelligence agencies that he had discussed the C.I.A.'s involvement in the B-26 affair with Air Force intelligence officers and that the flights had borne the code name "Operation Sparrow." When he protested the participants' arrest, an Air Force colonel had told him to "lay off the case" because "another government agency is involved."

The C.I.A. has replied by at least partially opening its files on the matter. The facts thus produced are hardly conclusive. The trial will continue. Its outcome should be interesting, but at the moment the defendants' innocence or guilt is the court's primary concern, not ours. Our concern is with the material from the C.I.A.'s files which shows that on May 25, at least four days before the *first* flight of a B-26 to Portugal, the C.I.A. knew about the Portuguese government's attempts to procure these planes. Yet the flights continued till early September. Even if one accepted the C.I.A.'s contention that the flights were made without official connivance, the facts remain: (a) the flights were known to be in the offing since last May: (b) they violated the U.S. Munitions Control Act (unless, of course, there was indeed official connivance) and a U.S. pledge not to sell such aircraft to Portugal; and (c) no attempt was made to immediately halt the flights in question.

What does such a revelation do to the brave anti-*apartheid* rhetoric which U.S. officials spray around the U.N. and Washington these days? "We will not support policies abroad which are based on the rule of minorities or the discredited notion that men are unequal before the law," said Mr. Johnson in a major speech on Africa last summer. Perhaps seven planes for bombing Angolan villages are no more to get excited about than the millions of American dollars which reinforce South Africa's regime of *apartheid*. The B-26 affair is merely another example of the utter lack of seriousness in official United States pronouncements about colonialism and racism in Africa.

ANTI-POLITICS?

We hear of a move among California's New Left to place Pope John's name in nomination for governor, as a protest against the politics of both Ronald Reagan and Governor Pat Brown. The plan is bemusing (who would have thought, a decade ago, that a Pope of Rome would be a symbolic rallying point for radical social protest?) but the politics are dubious. We have here as good an example as any of the anti-politics that besets the New Left.

The threat of the radical right in California, symbolized in the rise of Ronald Reagan, has never been

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greater. But large segments of the New Left pick this moment to boycott the Brown-Reagan election in the name of ideological purity and the long-range goal of a new politics. The recent New Left conference at East Los Angeles College voted overwhelmingly to withhold support from Brown; *Ramparts* magazine has labored ploddingly to prove that there is no discernible difference between Brown and Reagan.

Well, there is a difference, and one need not spot Lincolnesque qualities in Governor Brown to be able to detect it. The coming election will do a great deal to determine the future political climate of California, and one would think that everyone on the left ought to be interested in affecting it. Members of the New Left intent on sitting out the election would, of course, argue that the state, or the country, cannot be pulled to the left if everyone dutifully falls in line behind non-spectacular candidates like Governor Brown. But the search for ideological purity and a disdain for working within existing structures can be costly. Already a segment of the New Left is devoting a disproportionate amount of energy to baiting the Old Left, and liberals in general. (Bishop Pike's speech at East Los Angeles, which doubted the wisdom of boycotting the election, was not just rejected, it had to be hooted down.) The Americans for Democratic Action and the League for Industrial Democracy—natural allies on some fronts, at least—often seem to bring foam to the mouth.

It may well be that the tactics referred to here are ultimately productive. Or it may be that they represent an attempt to turn the New Left toward a sort of anti-politics in which coalition or compromise will increasingly constitute grounds for excommunication. Robert Scheer's congressional race against the entrenched liberal Jeffrey Cohelan was itself questionable. (With so many dispensable congressmen around, why try to knock out a Kennedy-style liberal with some influence in the House?) But more importantly Scheer's contempt for Congress and normal political functioning was not very well disguised. It may play well to the gallery to suggest that a seat in Congress is worthless except as a soapbox, but then, not very much legislation is ever going to get passed that way.

CRIME OF THE RICH

In the past five years the annual Gross National Product of the fifteen richest nations has increased by 36 percent. Their contribution to foreign aid has increased by a mere 3 percent. The United States, with a national product soaring to unprecedented heights, has just produced the lowest appropriation for foreign aid in nine years. The recent joint meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank hardly lifted a finger over the developing nations' crying need for funds. Due to the highest interest rates on the world money market in forty years, the World Bank is currently making loans at an interest rate of 6 percent, and even that will probably soon be raised. The world's developing nations, desperate as they may be for funds, must pay out $3.5 billion yearly to service their external public debts.

For every one of these shocking facts, one can find more or less reasonable "explanations," involving congressional politics, the international balance of payments, etc., etc. But all told, such facts add up to a terrible failure of nerve and conscience. Dives probably had his excuses too.

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

SOUTHERN POLITICS

Southern politics this year is demonstrating the truth of the gloomy aphorism that often conditions have to get worse before they get better. In Maryland and in Georgia, in Arkansas and in Louisiana, the least likely and most reactionary candidates have won Democratic primaries.

For the long term, the outlook still remains mildly promising but the interim results could scarcely be more dismal. What is underway in the South is the gradual break-up of one-party Southern Democratic rule. This has been essentially a feudal system based upon the exclusion of most Negroes and many poor whites from the franchise and control by a self-perpetuating elite of businessmen and plantation owners. Since this monopoly has existed for a hundred years, it is not easy to overturn it, and its break-up does not occur swiftly in a single election. It was threatened from below by the populist upheaval of the 1890s, but demagogy on the race issue divided poor whites from Negroes and consolidated the system at the turn of the century. Its unanimity on national issues was pierced temporarily by the Al Smith candidacy of 1928, but another twenty years were required before these divisions became chronic. And only in the last half-dozen years has the Southern Democracy begun to break up at the crucial state and local level. Republican members of the House and Senate from the Deep South are no longer a novelty; this fall it is conceivable although not probable that Republican governors may be elected in Georgia, Florida, and Arkansas.

The long-term hope for sanity and liberalism in the

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South rests on the prospect that eventually the coalition of most Negroes and most low-income whites which seemed imminent in the 1890s will at last be achieved. Economics would then replace race as the determining factor in politics. Court decisions, federal laws, and intensive organizing drives by civil rights organizations are beginning to enfranchise Negroes in large numbers. The abolition of the poll tax has made it easier for poor whites to vote. In no state and in only a comparatively few counties are Negroes a numerical majority, but if they could pick up the support of one-quarter to one-third of the white voters, they could provide a viable alternative to the present feudal monopoly.

This year's Democratic primaries make clear that a change in state voting laws is needed before realignment of parties occurs. Only in Virginia and North Carolina are voters registered along party lines. In other Southern states—as in some Northern states—a registered voter can vote in either the Democratic or Republican primary as he sees fit. This enables great numbers of conservative, white Southern Democrats—the largest single faction—to vote in Democratic primaries for the most conservative candidate and then vote in the final election for the Republican, if they wish. A liberal Democratic candidate such as former Governor Ellis Arnall who was defeated in Georgia has to overcome two hurdles: one in his own party primary and the other in the final election. If the Republican primaries were seriously contested, this situation would gradually change, but that day is still distant.

If the Republican Party were true to the heritage of Lincoln, it could appeal to Negroes and use them as one of its power bases. But only in Maryland and one or two other states does the Southern G.O.P. opt for this route to office. Elsewhere, the Republican organizations have been captured by ultra-reactionaries even in states where as recently as the beginning of the Eisenhower Administration, the party was progressive on race questions.

Cases in Point

Georgia is typical. Twenty years ago, Elbert P. Tuttle, a Northern-born lawyer who settled in Atlanta as a young man and developed a thriving law practice, was a dominant figure in the Republican Party and encouraged Negro participation. President Eisenhower appointed him to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals where he is now Chief Judge and an outstanding liberal jurist. Since his departure from the state political scene, wealthy businessmen have taken over the party and made it increasingly conservative. In 1964, Georgia went Republican in a presidential race for the first time in its history when the rural and small town Democrats joined the businessmen and part of the urban middle class in rejecting Lyndon Johnson and his civil rights program. Howard H. "Bo" Callaway was elected to the House in this landslide. Congressman Callaway is now the Republican candidate for governor. At 39, he is a younger and somewhat less colorful and amiable version of Barry Goldwater. He was educated at West Point; he is part of the business establishment, serving as director of a bank, director of the Georgia Power Company, and vice-president of the state Chamber of Commerce. He has zero appeal to Negroes and liberals.

Lester Maddox, the ex-restaurateur who brandished a pistol and an ax to scare off Negroes from his place of business in 1964, is not so wild and hysterical as that behavior suggests. Although not a regular politician, he has many of the canny instincts of the country courthouse politician. The Democratic rural machines are likely to rally behind him for fear that, if they do not, they would lose their local bastions of power in a Republican sweep.

Negroes and white liberals would seem well-advised, given this Hobson's choice, to back Callaway since anything that disrupts the political status quo might open the way to positive change. But the choice is so unattractive that it has driven at least one man, Representative Charles Weltner of Atlanta, out of politics altogether and may keep many voters away from the polls.

The prospect in Arkansas is actually worse. Most outside analysts were convinced that after twelve years of Orval Faubus, the state had no place to go but up—but Arkansas Democrats fooled them. In place of Faubus, a crafty political trimmer who had no real prejudice except a bias for holding office, the Democrats nominated former Judge Jim Johnson. His fanaticism against Negroes and against the federal government surpasses that of even Lester Maddox. He is unquestionably sincere, indeed frighteningly so, but what strikes outsiders as virtually psychotic is beguiling to many Arkansas whites. He is slightly favored to defeat Winthrop Rockefeller, the well-intentioned Republican candidate. Rockefeller would make a quite competent governor but he does not have either the crowd-pleasing personal warmth and bonhomie of his brother Nelson or the latter's political shrewdness.

Florida and Maryland are considerably less oppressive in their political atmosphere. Florida has a liberal Democratic candidate for governor in Miami's Mayor Robert King High. He is doing his best to allay but not surrender to the racist anxieties of the rural white voters in the northern part of the state along the Georgia border. In Maryland, the Democrats wound up with perennial candidate George P. Mahoney as their gubernatorial nominee after a many-sided primary contest in which he polled only 29 per cent of the vote. His slogan, "Your home is your castle—vote to keep it" is an appeal against open housing legislation. But Maryland has long experience in electing Republicans when the Democratic candidate is too dreadful and, fortunately, the state Republican Party has some qualified leaders. The Republican gubernatorial candidate is Spiro T. Agnew, the Baltimore County Executive, and he is almost certain to be elected.

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

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WHITE LIBERALS, BLACK SCHOOLS

The proliferation of ghetto schools in the North

MAURICE R. BERUBE

De facto segregation in the large city school systems of the North is accelerating. In New York City, the number of segregated schools with a Negro and Puerto Rican composition over eighty-five percent has doubled within the past five years. In Chicago nearly ninety percent of the Negro school population now attend such segregated schools. The prospects for integration in the major cities of the North are dimming when, ironically, inroads on *de jure* school segregation in the South are being made.

This comes as no revelation. But the verification of what was only intimated produces a delayed shock. The massive study of educational opportunity, commissioned under the 1964 Civil Rights Act, has unearthed the very predictable findings that the great majority of American children go to either white or black segregated schools. In its analysis of over 645,000 elementary and secondary school children, the study—under the supervision of James Coleman of Johns Hopkins University—concludes that this increasing rate of school segregation in the North will affect any minor gains towards eliminating *de jure* segregation in the South.

The most notable effect of this proliferation of ghetto schools in the major cities in the North has been to cause the Negro community to agonizingly reappraise the ghetto school. The talk is no longer of integration. It is of increasing the quality, even if this be within a segregated system. In a recent issue of *Urban Education*, Preston Wilcox, a Negro Columbia University professor of community organization, phrases the new shift *from* integration this way: "But if one believes that a segregated white school can be a 'good school,' then one must believe that a segregated Negro and Puerto Rican school . . . can be a 'good school.' "

This belief that the ghetto school can and should be turned into an educational showcase—in lieu of integration—is not new. Dr. Kenneth Clark in his monumental HARYOU-ACT study, *Youth in the Ghetto*, displayed a preference for the Gailbraith plan which selects slum districts and concentrates on building top flight ghetto schools "with superior school plants and an elite corps of teachers." And it must be remembered that it was Dr. Clark's testimony on the deleterious effects of segregated education on Negro children which weighed heavily in the 1954 Supreme Court decision condemning school segregation.

What *is* new is that this emphasis on developing good segregated schools, having taken root, is gathering momentum in the wake of the failure of gradualists to integrate city schools. In the dozen years since the Supreme Court struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine on the grounds that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," *de facto* segregation in the urban centers has continued to increase despite busing, school pairings and school reorganizations.

The strategy of improving the ghetto school focuses on the dilemma of *de facto* integration in the North. It is a strategy of despair when the most plausible and pragmatic tack the Negro can take is to accept the status quo and cynically try to make the most of it. However this ghetto strategy runs the risk of reinforcing racist sentiment; to keep the Negro segregated and at a distance has essentially been the racist cry. With the rhetoric of "black power" abroad in the land, talk of good segregated schools is considered a step backward by integrationist liberals of both colors.

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Yet the long-range future for Northern school integration is as threatening as the present. The statistical litany of demographic change predicts that within a generation there will be Negro majorities—such as now exists in Washington, D.C.—in Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland and St. Louis; precisely those cities which the NAACP reports in its recent four-year evaluation of integration to have been "evading the problem of segregation and [failing] to press for meaningful desegregation programs." Already the non-white *school* population has passed the majority mark and continues to soar in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Detroit, with near-majority status for New York. Only in the suburbs, where the white majority has fled, has some progress on integration been made.

Educational Transformation

Against this background, it comes as no surprise that concerned observers such as Clark and Wilcox stress transforming the ghetto school educationally if not racially. But a pivotal distinction exists between their approaches. One would prefer to invest the business leaders of the central city with the ultimate authority in deciding the shape and substance of ghetto education, while the other advances the equally revolutionary suggestion that the schools be turned over to the parents in the community.

Professor Wilcox's plan is "Black Power" in its most sophisticated formulation—although leaving itself open to more crude interpretations. It would invest the ghetto with the responsibility for the ghetto school. The formula, as spelled out with reference to a new reorganized intermediate school—I.S. 201—in Harlem, goes like this: a "school-community-committee" composed of parents, local leaders, and "professionals in educational or social science fields"—all from the community or with class ties to the community—would select a principal and teaching staff and have a voice in determining the curriculum. And over all would preside an ombudsman hired by the committee as "an 'educational expediter' with professional experience in education."

I.S. 201 raged as the center of a dispute when the umbrella groups of parents, religious groups and CORE and HARYOU-ACT poverty agency, attempted to galvanize community support to gain a School Council through a threatened boycott. The demand for complete desegregation of the totally segregated Harlem school was implausible in the face of the realities of school busing. But they did obtain an agreement with the Board that amounted to *formalizing* a council with a voice on staff selection, not veto power, but a channel in which to question personnel on the basis of "serious and sound" objections of a professional nature; in effect, a voice as viable as that of a PTA.

Unfortunately, part of the settlement hinged on the removal of the white principal. The integrated teaching staff —including the Negro assistant principal who refused an acting-principal's job offered to her on the basis of color —boycotted to have the white principal reinstated.

The dispute was symbolic: It illustrated the difficulty of integrating even the most modern school ($5 million air-conditioned building with special equipment) with an ideal staff (integrated volunteers with only three with no experience) and an advanced program (classes limited to 24, below average of 30, and special programs including foreign languages). The Board somewhat belatedly in June sent out ten thousand applications to white parents in the neighboring borough of Queens. Only eleven families replied.

It also illustrates the deep division over integration within the Negro ghetto itself. The "official" voice of Harlem, the *Amsterdam News*, looked upon the architectural grotesqueness of the windowless building on concrete stilts in more moderate integrationist terms: the building was an affront since it was "designed to keep parents from looking in and seeing it wasn't integrated and the kids from looking out to see it was Harlem." The more aroused demonstrators acted out of the spirit of Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey: they felt "Harlem was a colony" which required its own "Harlem Board of Education" where "black children be given black culture, black principals and black teachers."

The Benefits of Integration

This despair and frustration over integration becomes heightened with the evidence of the Coleman report showing that integrated education is educationally beneficial to Negro children. Negro pupils in integrated schools—particularly in classes where more than half the pupils were white—scored higher in test performance and generally performed better in school than Negro pupils in ghetto schools.

Perhaps the major stumbling block to a breakthrough in big city integration is the lack of direction from Washington. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe has been content to lay the burden of responsibility at the door of local school officials. In a speech to the Urban League last June he called upon local school authorities to form a "third front for racial equality in the United States."

This thinking is in line with a recent series of Federal Court decisions on school segregation. The Federal courts have interpreted the 1954 Brown Decision as outlawing *de jure* school segregation and the Supreme Court has refused to review these decisions. As a result, under the courts, school boards are under *no obligation* to correct racial imbalance emanating from residential housing patterns. However, the courts added that school authorities *could take steps, if they so wished*, to correct racial imbalance.

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The Commissioner of Education's office has taken this to mean to apply to *de jure* segregation—dual school systems—and last March issued revised guidelines to that effect. Although some staff of the Health, Education and Welfare Department are investigating the extent of *de facto* segregation in at least four cities—Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and Chester, Pa.—it is unlikely that Howe will make the political blunder of his predecessor, Francis Keppel, and withhold Federal grant-in-aid monies to these cities. (The cut-off of Federal aid to Superintendent Willis in Chicago lasted for a grand total of five days, until the political pressures produced a case of Federal bends and the monies were released.)

Commissioner Howe is passing the buck to the local school authorities. So far no northern school superintendent of any large city has unflinchingly and determinedly come out for school desegregation. Although there have been some instances of school authorities imaginatively pushing for integration—the New Haven experience is a prime example where school officials successfully implemented a voluntary transfer plan through vigorous efforts—the mundane rule is for school officials in the large Northern cities to wash their hands of the matter. *De facto* segregation is attributed in New York City's parlance, to "factors beyond the control of the Board of Education," namely, to housing patterns.

It has also been argued by some liberal educators that even the slight attempt to quicken the pace of desegregation following the 1954 Supreme Court decision—on the part of school officials in Washington, Pittsburgh and St. Louis—served to frighten whites into the suburbs. Whites fled in greater numbers out of a fear that integrated education was inferior, and, it is supposed, since there has been little evidence to the contrary—save the recent modest findings of the Coleman report—that any move to desegregate produced a counter-move to relocate. This is only partially true. One suspects that a segment of the white middle class left out of racist sentiments, but the causes for the bulk of the white migration are many; certainly the search for better housing as much as for better schools played a large part.

Even Commissioner Howe is tacitly pessimistic about Northern city school integration. He has stated that his first and foremost policy is "to make the schools of the central city such good schools that they attract people rather than repel them"; then integration may be possible.

It then narrows to the question of whether an excellent education may be provided *without* integration. So far as the Negro youngster has been concerned this has not been so. Negroes have been on the receiving end of an inferior schooling to the point where a sixth-grade Negro is a full grade level behind his white counterpart and by his senior year in high school (assuming he gets that far, which is unlikely), he is well over three full grade levels behind. Whatever initial handicaps the Negro youngster has before going to school as a result of poverty and discrimination, they are not overcome by school. He is not culture-oriented in those skills critical to holding a job and making a living and becoming a part of modern society. "The schools are presently damaging the children they exist to help," Dr. Clark concludes.

The Federal government—particularly as the fiscal problems of large cities necessitate increasing reliance on Washington aid—can play the decisive role both in revamping the educational level of the schools and their racial patterns. But that will first require, as Reginald Major remarks in *The Nation*, the integration of "thinking about the entire educational problems of cities." This integration of *weltanschauung* must take place on an official Federal level as well as in the body politic.

Meanwhile bitterness and frustration stalk the Negro ghettos. "The vehicle of integration no longer works," Livingston Wingate, HARYOU-ACT director exclaims. "We'll take the schools segregated style, but we'll let the community run them. The people of Harlem can't do any worse than has been done."

Should we compound our failure by letting the Negro now go it alone in trying to obtain that equality of educational opportunity that is rightfully his?

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I. L. SALOMON

RESPONSE TO A QUESTION AT A CONVOCATION

What would you have me say of her?
She wears a tricorn, is unique
In that, and lets a poem speak
For her: Deft as a milliner,

A stylist too in speech, her eye
A lens true as a telescope
Precisely focused; every trope
Blazed in her constellated sky.

Difficult, yes; but not obscure
At all; she is airy, not fay,
An earthly Brooklynite, her way
With words—oblique, perceptive, pure.

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The carefully hedged rights of the poor

POVERTY AS A CRIME

ISIDORE SILVER

American middle-class attitudes toward poverty are, to say the least, ambiguous. While admitting that Society, is, in some sense, "responsible" for the culture of poverty, so that social aid is necessary and proper, most Americans vaguely suspect that poverty could be relieved if the poor only tried to do something about it. Thus, we see the spectacle of expensive welfare and poverty programs abetted by stringent and exacting "tests" to measure eligibility for admission to these programs.

Implicit in this dualism is middle class America's belief that (a) welfare is a largesse and not an obligation and (b) to obtain such largesse, intolerable restrictions on privacy and dignity and even economic choice are perfectly permissible. If the poor don't like those limits, they can, well —starve. And it has happened.

American legal theory substantially supports the philosophy. If there is no right to be economically sustained, then there is merely a privilege (a gift, or the promise of one); privileges can be hedged about with qualifications. Many such qualifications, in practice, are not substantially related to either discernible standards or reality. Since privileges are involved, procedures for their denial or grant can be "flexible"—or standardless. Thus, the poor, in their multifarious dealings with welfare agencies often do not have certain rights, including the right to be confronted with charges, to retain counsel (if they could afford it, or non-legal advisors, if they can't), to rebut adverse evidence, and to have the evidence weighed in accordance with a known standard. A poor person living in public housing may be evicted as "undesirable" after a cursory hearing in which no discernible standard is applied and no representation by counsel is permitted. Incidentally, fairer hearing procedures are provided for in other areas of welfare legislation (e.g. social security and unemployment benefits) on the theory that these are "earned" rather than "gratuitous."

Yet, the law is not entirely clear. There is, for instance, the requirement that all Federally aided programs permit eligibility on a non-discriminatory basis. Thus, State plans for aid to dependent children, the blind and the disabled must meet certain tests, and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare may inspect their regulations to determine whether fairness exists.

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In addition, our Constitutional law has evolved significantly away from the old distinction between right (which can only be denied under circumstances satisfying due process of law) and privilege (which may be withheld for any reason). Whatever a particular benefit is called, it should not be denied for unconstitutionally arbitrary, frivolous, or inconsistent reasons. Admittedly, the law of welfare benefits—at least in the area of public assistance —has not caught up with this thinking, but this may be attributable to the fact that there is, in reality, very little law.

Unanswered Questions

May a state validly grant welfare to children whose fathers have deserted or are absent and yet withhold such grant where the father is present but unable to provide minimum support? May a state deny aid to children on the ground that a "substitute father" is in the home, especially where such "substitute" may be one who merely "visits frequently" (the Georgia definition)? May a state conduct "midnight raids" on welfare recipients without warrants and without probable cause to believe that a "father" is present? May a state forcibly remove individuals on the ground that he belongs in another state and has applied for welfare in the deporting state? May a board of education suspend or dismiss a student without discernible standards and without allowing persons other than the child and parents into the hearing room? These —surprisingly enough—are but some of the questions which remain to be judicially answered.

Will they be? The Office of Economic Opportunity is funding neighborhood law offices for the purpose of advising the poor of their rights. The program tends to be somewhat conservative, with the emphasis on general legal rights such as landlord-tenant, retail credit buying and other problems rather than specific rights against Government itself. Yet, inevitably some money is being given to people interested in more than passively advising those who come to them about their rights. Since the poor are particularly difficult to contact (years of welfare fraud —on the other side—has insured that), any realistic legal help must be actively profferred to them. Inevitably, the organized bar will have serious reservations about client solicitation "stirring up litigation" and other forms of conduct close to the ethical border. Indeed, the Wisconsin

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Bar Association has proposed that a Judicare form of program be established wherein an attorney handling a case for an impoverished client would be compensated from poverty funds, thus preserving the traditional lawyer-client relationship. Unfortunately, 19th-century concepts of ethical conduct are scarcely relevant in a society where much of law has already been "socialized." If Wagner Acts are designed to protect and to give rights to organized labor and civil rights laws are enacted to protect racial and religious minorities (and litigation is instituted not by private attorneys but by the Justice Department), then we can surely recognize that the interests of the poor can be similarly "socialized."

Although the legal problems of the poor are legion, the avenues of redress are only beginning to open. The Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law of the Columbia School of Social Work is presently gearing for attacks on many welfare laws which operate to deprive the poor of benefits. The Center and many of the recently established neighborhood law offices in various cities contain tough-minded idealists determined to find and "rationalize" standards in this vital area. They are also interested in eliminating some of the practices previously described.

Perhaps the most substantial problem is that of reaching the poor, informing them of their rights, and persuading them to commence law suits. Obviously, a teacher in a slum school, a social worker on his rounds, a minister in a church have substantially more access to the poor than does an attorney sitting in a neighborhood law office. The immediate task is to create a chain of contact in which informed members of the community armed with understandable legal materials could communicate with the masses.

This development presupposes that much can be accomplished with even a bare minimum of known legal rights. Thus, instead of employing vast armies of lawyers (which do not exist, anyway), the system of the future might well require "lay advocates" who obtain some legal background and, in turn, advise others. Again, this smacks of laymen practising law, a situation thoroughly abhorrent to bar associations. Lay advocates will undoubtedly become necessary since (a) they are more plentiful than lawyers and (b) they might settle many situations where lawyers' participation might operate to stiffen battle lines (for instance, school suspension proceedings).

Rarely are the rights of the poor publicly known; often, they are tucked away in voluminous manuals jealously guarded by the keeper of the seals, the local welfare administrator. Generally, they are difficult to obtain, even for lawyers. Yet, at least one agency, the Nassau County Welfare Department, is establishing a demonstration project to inform the poor of their legal right to contest determinations of eligibility. Any such contest would be waged before a separate body within the Department, so that the roles of advocate and judge are somewhat separated. (Federal administrative agencies have, of course, functioned this way for years). Of course, the county welfare administrator retains the power to determine whether an attorney representing a contestant is to be reimbursed from agency funds.

Vague rumblings of discontent (including a remarkable threat of unionization of welfare clients) have even affected the gargantuan New York City Welfare Department. Recently, it authorized the New York Civil Liberties Union to devise a prospective complaint review board mechanism to process some 6,000 complaints per month. If the foot is in the door, the door is wedged tightly against it, but, at least, we can see into the room.

Some welfare reformers envisage an attack even more radical than any previously suggested. Since very few of those eligible participate in welfare (the percentage is assumed to vary from 25 to 50) and since even those who participate rarely receive the full amount to which they are entitled, what would happen if all the eligibles claimed all their rights? Conceivably, the system would just break down and fall apart. Just how many more billions would be necessary to fulfill substantial demands in incalculable but the amount would be sufficient to break apart the tenuous national consensus on the subject.

Unfortunately, the American people may be quite willing to let the system break down rather than to repair it for the long haul. Indeed, the public may not be ready for the abolition of the welfare (as presently conceived), the true hope of many reformers. Undeniably, it would be cheaper to adopt a scheme of a guaranteed annual income per family and to abolish the welfare bureaucracy in the process. Presumably, welfare "cheats" could be detected by means such as a computerized tax system which are not inherently oppressive. Reformers are right when they argue that the only law known to welfare agencies is Parkinson's and that the primary function of welfare workers often is to find technical means of denying eligibility to the needy. Perhaps most Americans intuitively share the reformer's belief that welfare agencies exist to pay themselves salaries for processing denials or withdrawals of rights.

Given the American social (and perhaps psychic) commitment to welfare as a grudging gratuity to be carefully policed, is it realistic to argue that a breakdown of the system will be followed by the revelation that a guaran-

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teed annual income is the next and best answer? Is it possible that as the attacks on the system escalate, so will the defenses? Perhaps eligibility requirements will rise under the pressures. Perhaps the danger of increased "welfare fraud" would justify increasing the number of welfare cops? Of course, we cannot rule out the hope that the psychic commitment to present welfare concepts will change since we live in a dynamic world of almost unceasing intellectual revolution.

Before the breakdown, our present system will be faced with continuing legal attack. The substantial "property" interest of the poor person in his welfare payments will gain increasing judicial protection. The poor will continue to suffer, as they always have, but their anguish will be somewhat lessened. Inevitably, the system will become more just, for the attorneys and civil libertarians now concerned with the idea of fairness in both welfare laws and procedures are both dedicated and resourceful.

How much more personal freedom the poor will gain remains questionable. The "Culture of Poverty" is a condition of helplessness and dependency, largely socially inspired. Insofar as welfare has contributed to this culture, it must be radically reformed; insofar as the culture will continue to exist—even in the Great Society as presently envisioned—reform or even radicalization will not be enough.

Comment

ETHICS AND EVIDENCE

The post-conciliar moral theologian deserves a special sympathy. As an heir to some of the worst kinds of rationalism, he has a harsh history to live down. As an object of special vigilance on the part of the magisterium, his path to reform is strewn with well-smeared punji stakes. On top of this, or because of it, he suffers from an acute lack of credibility in the public mind. The presence among us of a Bernard Häring, a Charles Curran and a Louis Monden—to mention only a few names—has done much to win a new respect for moral theology, but the old memories linger on.

If for all these reasons the moral theologian has more than the usual burdens, he also has some extraordinarily difficult problems to deal with these days. One of these, clearly enough, is situation or contextual ethics, the complexities of which were well brought out in the Fletcher-McCabe exchange in these pages last January. Another is the impact of the social sciences on contemporary thought. Obviously their findings have a direct bearing on ethics, for through them we are gaining a better idea of what people actually do, why they do it, and the extent to which they—and their ethical systems—are products of their culture and time. However much we might like to overlook such data, it sometimes screams for attention.

For the moral theologian, I suspect, the availability of so much empirical evidence can be both a threat and a source of liberation. For those who confidently believe that empirical data will necessarily bear out the practical wisdom of the Church's moral prohibitions, any well-known evidence to the contrary is bound to seem a public menace. In that case, the safest course is to resolutely ignore the evidence, or to place one's faith in some further empirical research which will (naturally) deliver the expected confirmation of established principles in actual life.

A wiser course has been suggested by Father John G. Milhaven, S.J., in an article entitled "Towards an Epistemology of Ethics" (*Theological Studies,* June 1966). He points out that it is normally very difficult to show the intrinsic validity of moral absolutes. They have to be buttressed by further evidence, and the "decisive evidence" is bound to be empirical: "It is the evidence of the probable or certain consequences, of what is going to result from the act in question." As a possible paradigm case, he mentions divorce. While it is, he says, possible through an understanding of the husband-wife relationship to perceive the inherent evil of divorce, something more is required to establish its harm beyond all question, i.e., empirical evidence of the harmful social effects of divorce. Father Milhaven poses the ethical problem as in part "epistemological" to bring out the need for a way of conclusively *knowing* "the absolute and inviolable purpose of anything." Unless we have such knowledge, he seems to imply, we cannot have a sure guarantee that we "stand before an intrinsic, inviolable purpose of God."

One has to admire the quiet way Father Milhaven argues his case. His final point—put in the form of a question—is whether the theologian should not admit the importance of empirical evidence and make a more methodical and systematic use of it in his work. Not only would this help do away with "the rationalistic garb of much professional moralizing," but it would also make his work more credible to the "nonspecialist" (that's us). Indeed it would, but the tenor of Father Milhaven's article suggests that not too much more than that would happen; it would amount to only a small progressive move on the part of Catholic moral theology.

In fact, it would amount to a major revolution. To put it in an overly crude way, the traditional touchstone of those who argue for "intrinsic, inviolable purpose" is that no evidence *can* count against absolute values. For we know, before we even look at the evidence, that they are

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absolute; reason, revelation or the magisterium has told us so. The "facts" may lead one to admit extenuating circumstances for the convicted sinner, or pose difficult prudential problems of applying absolute principles to concrete situations, or—as in the case of usury—reveal a new social context which renders old absolutes irrelevant. But in no case, it seems, is the adherent of an absolutist set of values prepared to allow facts to change those values. Almost by definition, what makes a value "intrinsic," or a purpose "inviolable," is that it is proof against any contrary empirical evidence. Overthrow this position and you weaken considerably the very idea of intrinsic values.

Absolute Values

Father Milhaven seems to hedge on this point. It is not clear whether he sees the main contribution of empirical evidence as only "epistemological" (i.e., helping us to *know* absolute values *are* absolute values); or whether its relevance lies in helping us to judge which values if any are, *in the first place,* absolute or intrinsic.

The example of divorce is instructive here. It may be true, as Father Milhaven contends, that in the generality of cases divorce is socially harmful. Yet the empirical evidence is hardly so decisive as to confirm its necessary evil in every case. On the contrary, almost anyone can think of instances where divorce and re-marriage appear to have produced some notable social goods (children restored to normal life, an end to parental fighting, and so on). Father Milhaven asserts, however, that only the generality of cases is morally significant; it is sufficient to overwhelm the exceptional case. He does not say whether he is willing to openly allow a tailoring of the principle to the full range of the evidence: forbidding it where the empirical evidence shows it would probably be harmful to individuals and society, allowing it where no evil is likely to result. But unless the moralist is willing to use the evidence in this way—allowing it to modify absolute principles—it is hard to see that he is taking it seriously at all. As I mentioned, though, Father Milhaven displays a certain ambivalence. His choice and use of examples (divorce, lying, euthanasia and suicide) hint that evidence can be expected to confirm traditional absolutes; but his general argument that empirical evidence should systematically enter into the formation of moral judgments entails the possibility of a revision or rejection of many present absolutes.

Partially in question here is the nature of moral principles. James M. Gustafson of the Yale Department of Religious Studies has helpfully distinguished betweeen a "prescriptive" and an "illuminative" use of principles ("Context Versus Principles: A Misplaced Debate in Christian Ethics"). In the former, "the center of gravity is on the reliability of traditional moral propositions." They are the "most important or sole authority for the governing of action." In the latter, principles are used "to *interpret* what is morally wrong and morally right about a particular occasion." The center of gravity here is on "the newness, the openness, the freedom that is present . . ." With this distinction in mind, he argues, one can see why the debate over context versus principles is "misplaced": it is not a question of ethicists choosing one or the other, but of the use they assign to principles. I would suggest that this is one source of Father Milhaven's ambiguity. His deployment of examples appears to presuppose a prescriptive use of principles, but his general argument appears to countenance—or open the way for—an illuminative use.

Gustafson also contributes another useful point. He notes that contemporary moralists usually start from one of four places: (1) some begin with "as accurate and perceptive social or situational analysis as possible"; (2) some "begin with fundamental theological affirmations"; (3) "still others locate moral principles as the center point for discussion"; (4) for some, finally, "it is the nature of the Christian's life in Christ and its proper expression in moral conduct." Inevitably, Gustafson adds, there is a movement from one of these starting points to a consideration of its relationship to the others.

Father Milhaven, I would guess, believes the Catholic moralist should start from (3)—"moral principles"—but then quickly move on to (1)—"social or situational analysis"—trying, if possible, to reduce (1) and (3) to a single starting point. Missing altogether in his discussion is any reference to Gustafson's (2) and (4). As a consequence, quite apart from other considerations, his entire discussion of the place of empirical evidence is exceedingly narrow in scope.

None of this would be worth talking about at all were it not for the profound impact of empirical data on the contemporary Catholic consciousness. Whether the moralists like it or not, Catholics today are influenced by empirical evidence and by their own experience. The sudden collapse of opposition in many quarters to the use of contraceptives reflects the impact of evidence that their use does not necessarily harm the husband-wife relationship (but may even do the couple and their children much good). The debate on private property, the incipient struggle on divorce, homosexuality, masturbation and suicide likewise show the cumulative impact of new evidence. To use Gustafson's phrase, there are many signs in the Church of an implicit shift from a "prescriptive" to an "illuminative" use of principles. Contributing to this shift also, of course, has been a re-examination of theological principles and a fresh look at the requirements of the Christian life.

Is this a healthy development? I think so, but—as an exercise in taking empirical data seriously—we would probably do well to suspend judgment. We have little evidence yet to conclude that the net, long-term result will be a richer Christian ethical life. In the meantime,

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though, we might recognize that the history of Catholic morality shows that empirical evidence has always had an impact, even if the evidence has not always been allowed a conscious place in reformulating principles. Its impact can usually be seen only in retrospect. Even if it is true, as David Hume contended, that an "ought" cannot logically be derived from an "is," the history of morality indicates that it has been standard practice for societies and institutions to do so. And this includes the Church. The Church allows many licit reasons for killing, stealing, lying and dishonoring one's parents. Presumably, one historical reason for this permissiveness is that social facts have shown the need for a wide range of exceptions to otherwise "intrinsic" values.

What needs to be seen—to make a tentative response to Father Milhaven's tentative question about allowing a place for empirical evidence in ethical judgments—is that the admission of such evidence is bound to have ethical consequences. That means, then, that any decision to allow it a central place must, in part, be an ethical decision. And that means asking all over again: what is it to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect?

DANIEL CALLAHAN

A SITTING PIDGEON

THE STAGE

"Louder and gayer," says Walter Pidgeon to the gypsy violins. *"Louder and gayer!"* He is dying of heart-trouble, the family business has just been expropriated by a bounder and the dinner is ruined: but no matter. Old Walter is never too far gone to savor the irony. The former Mr. Miniver has made a nice sideline of refusing the blindfold, and going down with a smile playing at the corners of his stiff upper-lip, and is thus perfectly cast for a revival of "Dinner at Eight," Broadway's spunky answer to the Depression.

It is hard to believe now that this slick confection was greeted as something of a bombshell in 1932. It is, to be sure, packed with the best period-misery: but so artifically presented as to induce only a superslick melancholy, as a Noel Coward song might. When Darren McGavin, playing a ruined actor, turns on the gas and waits stoically for the end, we feel as the audience must have felt when Fanny Brice sang "My Man": a kind of non-objective sadness, a showbiz sadness that is all form and no content.

The other name for this is sentimentality. But it would be unfair to leave it at that. A showman like Coward or George S. Kaufman contracted to make you happy or sad by means of sheer technique and he honored this contract. If he had to enlist suicide or poverty or incurable disease it was not to make you think about those things, any more than a comedian wants you to think about mother-in-laws. Songs must have words, and sad songs must have sad words, but the end-product is only a generalized sorrow and not a sorrow *about* something. Whether mother dies of cancer or father dies of drinking is of small account.

Thus Kaufman and Edna Ferber, the authors of "Dinner," do not scruple to give us this actor who is not an actor at all but a metaphorical projection, and to hit him with all the woes of the profession until he crumples like a wax doll. They tell us nothing that would help us to focus him, nothing that would make his collapse personally important. He is just a print of "the actor" dying in "the hotel-room."

This convention must be understood before plays like "Dinner" can be appreciated. Ferber and Kaufman were not a pair of incompetents who did not know how to create characters. They were talented theater-people working within a convention. Their allowance of emotional make-believe was larger than ours. Their audience accepted melodrama not because it was believable but because it made for an exciting evening. No one accused an author afterwards of being a phony; that was precisely his profession. The question was whether he was a good entertainer or a bad one. And melodrama was subject to this test as much as comedy was.

Unfortunately, it is hard for later audiences to detach the convention from the play. Kaufman and Ferber may have been wantonly sincere and, within the ground rules, truthful when they wrote "Dinner at Eight." But to us it looks much more like a Kaufman-comedy than a truthful play. The hailstorm of catastrophes which supposedly add up to tragedy is closer to Marx Brothers farce than to any current definition of serious. The plot (and there is yards of it) is simply that of a period-comedy in which everything goes wrong, and expectation is thwarted to the left instead of the right. And as for those gypsies. . . .

"Louder and gayer" indeed! If you wanted to parody the whole bittersweet, dance-little-lady, dance-little-man movement, you could hardly concoct a more malicious line. Yet it seems that Miss Ferber herself, who still believes that the play is desperately relevant, inserted the line only recently. I gather that she believes it is suitable to *any* abyss.

If the play is watched, as one watches a good 1930s movie, with a proper respect for what they were trying to do, with a respect for the, in some ways, greater sophistication of our ancestors as well as for Kaufman's astonishing sense of pace, it can still be enjoyed—about as much as one can enjoy a 1930s movie. There is no evidence for believing that the original audience were a bunch of hicks who took the play as literal truth. But they did accept it as a stylized horror story and as a melodramatic metaphor for their own troubles. And this, strain though we may, we can no longer do.

Unfortunately, the cast is almost completely unsatis-

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factory, with the exception of Pidgeon who, of course, grew up to these conventions. It is easy to face cast revivals, simply by copying the hair- and makeup-styles, but point-of-view casting is something else. Pamela Tiffin and Judith Barcroft both look like the girls on the old song-sheets, and that's about all that can be said about that. (*At the Alvin*) WILFRID SHEED

THE BIBLE

THE SCREEN

The name of the movie is "The Bible . . . In the Beginning." So I am somewhat surprised, now that the reviews are appearing, at the critics' protest that the film doesn't cover the whole Bible. New York critics and visitors to the city must have seen the enormous, block-long billboard that has for more than two years been advertising "The Bible . . . In the Beginning" and announcing to one and all that it covers The Creation, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah's Ark, Tower of Babel, and Abraham.

On the whole, the film covers them well. But I've been wondering if all the critics saw the same picture. There has never been such a diversity of reviews—running the gamut from "breathtaking in scope and grandeur" and "as fine a version of the Old Testament as we shall ever see in the movies" and "stunning production" down to "literal pictorial representations" and "the film vulgarizes a host of sublime images" and "dull" and "Sunday-school-pageant mood" and eventually down to two critics who must have sat side-by-side: "something for everyone" and "it has something in it to offend everybody."

This "Bible," produced by Dino De Laurentiis and directed by John Huston, is a spectacular epic all right—but in the new style, without screaming expense (although it cost 18 million) and without sex and orgies in lush, elaborate sets (although both are present without being the picture's *raison d'etre*). The film's excellent script was written by Christopher Fry who has caught well the Bible's poetic cadence and has remained faithful to the original stories—except perhaps in the Tower of Babel episode. (Seeing "The Bible" sent me to reading the Genesis volume in the new scholarly Anchor Bible series with all its notes and comments; and I realized again what a good job Fry had done in his difficult assignment.) Using a literal technique, Fry neither editorializes nor interprets but leaves each viewer to understand for himself. Many of the critics objected to the film's godly Jehovah calling Him angry, jealous, capricious, demanding, vengeful, etc., for His expelling Adam and Eve from the Garden, insisting that Noah build the Ark while his neighbors laughed at the "foolish" man, demanding that Abraham sacrifice Isaac. Perhaps these critics are objecting not so much to the film (which effectively makes its points about obedient Noah and Abraham and sinful Cain and the Sodomites without obvious labels) as to the Bible itself.

De Laurentiis' production throughout "The Bible" is first-rate, and much of the credit should go to his staff, especially Ernst Haas for his magnificent Creation sequences, Giuseppe Rotunno for his fine color photography that is impressively displayed on a large screen, for Mario Chiari's handsome art direction, for Toshiro Mayuzumi's non-intrusive and reverential musical score. No doubt major credit should go to John Huston who served in many capacities and did well in them all—as director of the extraordinary, large cast; as actor in his portrait of respectful, playful Noah; and as both the reader of the narration and the voice of God, a chore he does particularly well. Huston, no doubt, served in many more ways as director of the overall project, and perhaps his wisest decision was to limit "The Bible" to the first 22 chapters of Genesis.

On the whole, the choice of actors was good. Although youthful Swedish Ulla Bergryd is rather slight and unimpressive as Eve with flowing blond hair covering her nakedness in appropriate places, well-built Michael Parks is good as Adam; neither has much acting to do in beautiful Eden or afterward. Richard Harris whoops it up as Cain, leaving little for Abel (Franco Nero) to do except get killed. Huston is just right as Noah in the Flood and Ark episode, the only story that makes room for humor and warmth. This is probably the best and liveliest part of the film and is considerably pepped up by the good supporting cast here, both human and animal. It's too bad that De Laurentiis didn't save the million he spent on the Tower of Babel sequences; while the Tower itself is good to look at, the events and narration in this part of "The Bible" are as confusing as the many languages that scattered its participants.

For some audiences, the Abraham story will be the most interesting. It is by far the longest in this three-hour movie, and in a way, has the most depth. What's more, its cast comes up to the requirements of its difficult tale. George C. Scott is excellent as the patriarch who founds a line and proves worthy of God's love and concern. In smaller roles, Ava Gardner, who has never looked lovelier, stands out as Sarah, his wife; Zoe Sallis does well as Hagar who mothers his child; and Peter O'Toole is good as the three men who appear to Abraham (two angels and God?) and later as the two angels who visit Sodom before its destruction. No doubt Cecil DeMille would consider this film's representation of Sodom as too tame; but without getting explicit in it orgies, it suggests a life far more evil than any of the DeMille bacchanals.

No doubt audiences will vary in their opinions of "The Bible" as much as the critics do. For me, it stands out as one of the best epics I've seen. Perhaps it's too long, but the only cuts I'd make are in the Babel episode. The rest of the film comes through well for me as a partly-religious, partly-entertaining experience. Each viewer will probably see it according to what he's looking for and what he brings to it. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

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BOOKS

John Barth: a buoyant denial of relevance

Giles Goat-Boy
JOHN BARTH
Doubleday, $6.95

CHARLES THOMAS SAMUELS

Since the *Titanic*, no ship has gone down amid more publicity than the modern novel. Yet critical concern ignores those unsinkables who make for land in small, seaworthy crafts to follow those who drift away in chancy vessels of their own devising. Some such metaphor comes to mind about John Barth's first novel. *The Floating Opera* refers not only to the showboat on which the novel concludes but to the novel itself: crazily freighted with excess decoration and programmatically wayward on its trip.

Barth's first book nearly won the National Book Award. His third, *The Sot-Weed Factor*, received excellent reviews and ranked high on the *Herald Tribune* poll of best novels published since World War II. The author gets rave notices in *Time*, *Book Week*, and *The New York Times*. Admired by the squarest and the hippest of literary spokesmen, he is nevertheless the current odds-on favorite for the title "underground novelist." I.e., he is not much read.

His first two books show why. *The Floating Opera* (1956) and *End of the Road* (1958) are poor in novelistic pleasure. Their characters are dialectical sticks dressed in the thinnest of psychological garments, so that Barth's relentless disrobing of them provokes no feeling stronger than *déjà vu*. The plots through which they mechanically move are inorganic, since such characters cannot project themselves through action but only through talk. Barth relies on rhetoric, or rhetoric sliced into dialogue to convey a liveliness, as this device avows, which is intellectual if it is anything. Disappointingly, the ideas in both books are banal. *The Floating Opera* posits the meaninglessness of suicide in a world without meaning, but Barth's idea of meaninglessness is no more cogent or inclusive than the risible glimpse the narrator gets of his mirrored first intercourse. Jacob Horner, the hero-villain of *End of the Road*, mocks marriage, morality, and reason, only to affirm the most familiar of contemporary makeshift faiths:

"Articulation! There, by Joe, was *my* absolute, if I could be said to have one. At any rate, it is the only thing I can think of about which I ever had, with any frequency at all, the feelings one usually has for one's absolutes. To turn experience into speech—that is, to classify, to categorize, to conceptualize, to grammarize, to sanctify it—is always a betrayal of experience, a falsification of it; but only so betrayed can it be dealt with at all, and only in so dealing with it did I ever feel a man, alive and kicking. It is therefore that, when I had cause to think about it at all, I responded to this precise falsification, this adroit, careful mythmaking, with all the upsetting exhilaration of any artist at his work. When my mythoplastic razors were sharply honed, it was unparalleled sport to lay about with them, to have at reality."

After this modish advocacy of existential play, of the viable pleasure in arbitrary naming, Horner breaks out in a sinister grin: "In other senses, of course, I don't believe this at all." (For the floating novelist, it is *de rigueur* not to care where the vessel is going.)

In an interview published in *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* (and referred to in the epistolary Chinese boxes which preface *Giles Goat-Boy*), Barth makes his *ars poetica* explicit: "A . . . way to come to terms with the discrepancy between art and the Real Thing is to *affirm* the artificial element in art. . . . Wouldn't it be fun to write a book with pop-up scenes, for instance, like kids' books used to have? Or print *Finnegans Wake* on a very long roller-towel?"

No need to remind Barth that these notions are older than the *Titanic*; the ship has been sinking since it was launched. Or that such celebrations of artifice are often made by writers chronically unable to simulate the real; Barth himself admits, "I never could write realistic dialogue very well anyhow, and so I decided it was a bad idea for writers to write realistic dialogue."

There is nothing necessarily wrong with this conception of the novel. The test of artifice is the test of art. Unhappily, Barth's third novel is not *Finnegans Wake* on a roller-towel but something as vast and dispensable. An imitation of the 18th-century novel, particularly *Tom Jones*, written in a prose that manages, in one stroke, to catch the style and explode its underlying metaphysics, *The Sot-Weed Factor* is the sort of novel one dares in some nihilistic stupor. In a manner suitably solipsistic for one of his metaphysical persuasion, Barth wrote out the dare—all 806 pages!

The dizzying intrigues, the relentless obscenity, the unmasking of history's pretensions to accuracy and coherence, the minute fidelity to the Enlightenment *Bildungsroman* that nevertheless turns the process upside down: these things give *The Sot-Weed Factor* the vigor of virtuosity. But the virtuosity is labored and the vigor prurient. In Barth's brutal world, the high spirits and animal delectation of Fielding are intellectual attitudes: a worked-up salaciousness, infinitely self-conscious.

Worse, the book has the vulgar ease of aimless imitation. "It's an infectious style, and not very hard to do," Barth has admitted. Or as Dr. Johnson put it when asked to judge another piece of pedantic reconstruction, "a man might write such stuff forever, if he would *abandon* his mind to it."

For all the sparks of humor, the "Rabelaisian" episodes (one man's "Rabelais" being another's donnish smut), the incredible way in which the plot knits itself into crises, *The Sot-Weed Factor* is a prodigy of tedium. This even Barth's

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most famous advocate, Leslie Fiedler, nearly concedes: "For 50 pages at a time it can even be boring or confusing or both; but what are 50 pages in so immense a text, and what do a little boredom and confusion matter in the midst of so dazzling a demonstration of virtuosity, ambition, and sheer courage?"

Only readers resolutely immune to boredom and confusion will echo Fiedler's generous question after Barth's latest work. It will take a lot of sheer concern for those self-made rafts braving our literary crisis to wave Barth's latest novel home. Stripped of the 18th-century gaiety borrowed in *The Sot-Weed Factor*, the recognizable if stilted formulae of *End of the Road*, the first book's chatty *angst*, what does Barth put on for life insurance? The oldest, leakiest, most cumbersome of devices: allegory. But not just allegory—710 pages of allegory, featuring the faceless hero of every epic (here masked as a goat-boy learning to become human and his alter-ego, a multifaced demon, Harold Bray, brother to Henry Burlingame in Barth's previous book). And all this expressed in prose which reads as if it were written by a computer, which indeed, ultimately it was:

"For many terms, he said, students and staff from the westernmost East-Campus colleges had 'transferred' freely in large numbers, without authorization, across the line to West Campus. More recently, however, EASCAC had read out that any further unauthorized transferees would be EATen at the line—and only the sick or feeble-minded were ever authorized. WESCAC's reply had been a threat to EAT Nikolay College automatically the instant any Nikolayan EAT-wave crossed the west side of the Power Line, and EASCAC had read out an identical threat."

This is only apparently gibberish. The reader of *Giles Goat-Boy* quickly learns to translate. Barth embodies the world as a great University, split into two armed warfare machines after Campus Riot II (W.W. II) and respectively run by two computers, WESCAC and EASCAC. The passage I have quoted means to suggest the idiocy of the Cold War (Barth's Quiet Riot) and, at an obvious cost, it does. There are other transcriptions, similarly written and equally illuminating, of the extermination of the Jews (Moishians) by the Nazis (Bonifascists), the bombing of the Japanese (Amaterasus) by the Americans (New Tammany College), and the nuclear gamesmanship between Russia (Nikolay College) and the forelocked, handsome chancellor of N.T.C., Lucky Rexford.

This pageant in modern history reminds one of nothing so much as the pig-latin playlets of our youth. Moreover, Barth allegorizes within his allegories, and the meaning is seldom secure. The political allegory impels but does not clarify the plot; except as it demonstrates man's senselessness, it has even less to do with the book's theme. The central motif in *Giles Goat-Boy*, as in *The Sot-Weed Factor*, is the hero's gradual acceptance, after countless twists of fate and repeated exposures of hypocrisy, of the contingent, ambiguous, ultimately inscrutable nature of the human soul. Giles moves from goatdom to studentdom with a belief in their separation which he must finally give up.

At the moment when he ceases to search for answers and accepts the irrevocable mixture of the human and the animal, he becomes the GILES, the new prophet of a new testament, enshrined (or rather entaped) in the Revised New Syllabus which forms the novel: "My one infirmity . . . was having thought . . . goatly gifts in need of cure. . . . Studentdom it was that limped: hobbled by false distinctions, crippled by categories! I returned unflinchingly the stares of male and female undergraduates thronging the sidewalks, and reasoned one strong step further: my infirmity was that I *had* thought myself first goat, then wholly human boy, when in fact I was a goat-boy, both and neither: a walking refutation of such false conceits."

Thus armed with his knowledge of radical impurity, the hero may affirm the confusions to which he has been condemned: "Things had to be lost before they could be found, broken before they could be fixed, infirm before they could be well, opaque before they could be clear. . . ." And then, this enormous novel, with its outlandish machinery, ersatz language, mythological parallels, allegories, and metaphysics comes to rest in the affirmation of meaninglessness, madness, ungovernable flux. Giles Goat-Boy provides a "posttape" which pessimistically derides those few small intimations of coherence the novel possesses, Barth adds a postscript denying that the posttape is by Giles, and the "Editor" denies that the postscript is by Barth. It is all very cute, but after a 710-page journey cuteness is small comfort for a reader still at sea.

But that, Barth would answer, is precisely where we live. What book is truer to our condition than one which fiddles while the ship goes down, roams while we burn? The retort to this assertion (as old as the idea of art) can never satisfy the sniggering singers of our sinking ship. Beneath Barth's novels and the taste which finds them congenial is a laughing denial of relevance, accuracy, even truth. When every vision seems an arbitrary version, why not judge each by its audacity, its self-regard, its buoyant "spiritedness."

The whole argument comes down to the test of fun. I will give one instance of Barth's comedy. It is chosen to make a point, but not arbitrarily (it comes from the book's set-piece, a long parody of *Oedipus Rex*) and an hour's dipping through Barth's pages will prove it characteristic. The Committee Chairman (Chorus) is announcing the entrance of Agenora (Jocasta):

THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN: Hey look; here comes old Agenora. [Aside] That woman can't resist a quarrel or a man. Her tongue is second to none for meanness, and she'll sleep with anything that has a—[To AGENORA] Deaness,

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REVIEWERS

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dear! How nice you look today! So young!

AGENORA: And you're so gallant. Pity you're not well hung.

Either you find this witty and Barth a clown inspired by comic vertigo, or you don't and you let him drift.

You Don't Say: Studies of Modern American Inhibitions

BENJAMIN DE MOTT

Harcourt, Brace, $4.50

JOHN P. SISK

Mr. De Mott's second collection of essays represents work done in the sixties for such publications as *Commentary, The American Scholar, The New Republic* and *The New York Review of Books*. The pieces gathered together, the author states in a foreword, "harp on a simple truth: certain ways of feeling and talking that were once perfectly acceptable are now, in effect, forbidden." The book that follows may not be quite the integrated bundle this statement and the subtitle suggest. However, given the range of subject matter (*Playboy* magazine, styles in greeting cards, sky-diving, social work in Harlem, pessimism in native novelists, current fashions in politics and pedagogy) the unity of theme and tone is impressive.

The opening piece on *Playboy*, to my mind the best available anatomy of its subject, is effectively placed first since it introduces themes upon which variations are subsequently played. That magazine, with its assumption of the world as a "collection of individual human beings each burning with sexual need," is related to the *New Yorker* and the Luce publications in being, like them, "enormously successful enterprises at reduction." Subsequently we see other such reductive enterprises at reduction, all of them giving away too much in the interest of managing and clarifying the complex: the anti-American stereotypes cultivated by British writers; the fear of absolutes in the perspectivism of modern thought; the trend towards an apolitical politics; the intellectual's practice of over-simplifying the motivations of his attackers.

The latter reductionist is measured in a piece on the Domestic Peace Corps in Harlem. The activity of this group, assuming as it did the indispensability of institutions as means, hardly satisfied the demands of Apocalyptic Man, who may shake the world "but loses touch with it, loses touch with the sense of others, the awareness of general life." Unlike so many critics of our general life whose base is the academy (he is professor of English at Amherst), Mr. De Mott does not lose touch. Having kept touch, he can range unself-consciously between popular and high culture with a kind of tough pragmatism that drives him to ask always the most pertinent question: What, given the needs of human existence, is the practical consequence of this otherwise understandable or admirable position?

Thus in "The Little Red Discount House" Mr. De Mott is able to admire the perspectivist's operating conviction that all claims and all positions must be scaled down and examined for ulterior motivations: it is a "splendid resource of the mind" against ideology and fanaticism, and possibly an advance toward the acceptance of otherness. But at the same time there is the moral laziness that so often results when such a conviction is brought down into the arena of everyday life. You cannot, he concedes, teach charity, sympathy and respect for the other, but will these virtues be "strengthened if you teach their opposites?"

What Mr. De Mott is questioning here is the adequacy of irony as a critical or pedagogical device. So he reminds the academy, in which he finds a crippling embarrassment about "messages" in literature, that a "terror of moralizing is not a value in itself." To assume that it is can result in one kind of American muteness, a subject with which, as his title indicates, Mr. De Mott is pervasively concerned in this book. Throughout he takes issue with the assumption (to which perspectivism gives considerable comfort) "that language is the foe of honesty and reality." He concludes his book, in fact, with the observation "that neither in mortuaries nor elsewhere is it demonstrable that wisdom and silence are the same."

Before Mr. De Mott was a professor and a critic he was a reporter, a reason perhaps why he has not lost his awareness of general life and his sense of the living language. At times, it is true, he can be excessively parenthetical or indulge a fondness for negative constructions that give the effect of backing into position. But I take these characteristics to be the side-effects of a passion for precision; besides, the positions backed into are generally strong ones. What is more obvious is the extent to which his prose is the expression of a supple, witty and concerned mind.

Foxe's Book of Martyrs

EDIT. G. A. WILLIAMSON

Little, Brown, $7.50

JOHN RATTE

Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, here rationally reduced by the elimination of pre-Wyclifian and continental Reformation material from 6000 pages to 600, impressively illustrates the confusion of theological and political issues in the English Reformation. The ecclesiological alterations of Henry VIII were inspired by dynastic necessity but they also corresponded to widespread disaffection with Rome and religion; to see this one need only follow Foxe's advice and go to Chaucer. Nevertheless they only partially (and for the most part unintentionally) corresponded to the equally indigenous tradition of scriptural radicalism begun with Wyclif. The crisis of Erastian persecution of both Roman and Protestant dissent came in 1541 with the simultaneous execution, dictated by one order of the King's Council, of six men, "three by fire for the gospel, three by hanging, drawing, and quartering for popery." Under Bloody Mary the ambiguous reform typified for Foxe by the Six Articles was obscured by systematic terror and a clear national danger; and the real conflict between radical reform Christianity and (English) Catholic orthodoxy had scarcely begun when Elizabeth ended it. For Foxe and like-minded men the reign of young Edward remained the last hope.

But the variety of oppression experienced by those who "suffered for the

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gospel" in Foxe's day is not the source of the power of his book for the modern reader, though it is probably the aspect of the work which must first strike the historian and make him grateful for this clean and simple job of editing and printing. Foxe was a dramatic writer of considerable talent. In spite of Catholic polemic and some modern scholarly cavilling to the contrary he showed a reasonable interest in sources and accuracy. Sharp dialogue, realistic details of dress and place and that peculiar mood of expectation and insecurity mingled which mark an actual happening, particularize what would otherwise be a Homeric catalogue of death. Williamson, a classical and Christian scholar, has edited out prolixity and various other stylistic peculiarities which were virtues to the word-hungry Elizabethans and seem vices today. The best of Foxe's language is released: meet John Bland, "a man so little born for his own commodity that no part of his life was separated from the common utility of all men"; or read this straightforward explanation for the demise of six men and one woman in Coventry in 1615: "The principal cause of the apprehension of these persons was teaching their children the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments in English." King Henry, his theological sensibilities heightened by the destruction of the monasteries, interviews one John Lambert:

". . . Answer touching the sacrament of the altar, whether dost thou say that it is the body of Christ or wilt deny it?" With that word the king lifted up his cap.

"I answer with St. Augustine that it is the body of Christ after a certain manner."

"Answer me neither out of St. Augustine neither by the authority of any other: tell me plainly whether thou sayest it is the body of Christ or no." These words the king spake again in Latin.

"Then I deny it to be the body of Christ."

"Mark well; for now thou shalt be condemned by Christ's own words, Hoc est corpus meum."

And then there is Lambert's end, which can stand for them all.

For after his legs were consumed up to the stumps, and the wretched tormentors had withdrawn the fire from him so that but a small fire and coals were left under him, two that stood on each side of him with their halberds pitched him upon their pikes as far as the chain would reach. Then he lifting up such hands as he had, and his fingers flaming with fire, cried unto the people, "none but Christ, none but Christ"; and so, being let down from their halberds, fell into the fire and there gave up his life.

Long ago Acton made it clear that neither side could blame the other for cruelty in those days, and no cause can survive such suffering. "It is hard," Williamson comments, "for our generation to imagine a time when men, and women, too, could be tortured and burnt at the stake for denying the metaphysical doctrine of transubstantiation, for possessing a New Testament, for saying the Lord's Prayer in English, for inscribing a text on a tavern wall, for inattendance at Church, for eating flesh on a Friday"; in fact it is hard for us to imagine that men have been tortured and shot for denying the

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sociological doctrine of class war, or to see anything more than the PR value in self-immolation by gasoline.

Foxe's art, part researcher's indefatigability, part journalist's flair, all passion for the gospel (and Williamson's effort as well) bring these heroic deaths and the context of hatred, muddle and hesitation in which they were acted out to exert a pressure of wonder and pity on the conscience of the reader which is so great that he ceases to marvel that man should murder man in the name of Christ Jesus (or the Pope) and is left bleakly puzzled that man should kill at all.

What is so harrowing in these disembowellings, these fires lit to fathers by the forced hands of their sons, these slow roastings of pregnant women and aged divines, is not the conviction of the victims, but the doubts of their executioners. Hired gangsters jumping Tyndal in an Amsterdam alley: that we can understand. John Taylor's parishioners crowd around Aldham Common as the graybeard undresses, and some cry "God save thee, good Doctor Taylor! Christ strengthen and help thee; the Holy Ghost comfort thee": but no one moves to stop the fire: that we can understand. The brutal gesture of the assassin, the cowardice of the crowd, are our intimates; what puzzles is the dead man in the ashes.

The Right to Bear Arms

CARL BAKAL

McGraw-Hill $6.95

DAVID CORT

The gun was not invented for any other purpose except to kill. Killing people is anti-social; therefore society must control the distribution of guns. So much is obvious. But the gun issue in the United States is a little more complex than that, as Carl Bakal makes clear in this thorough and definitive study of guns and gun laws.

The accident of my reviewing this book becomes ironical in view of my earlier defense of the hunter's and farmer's inalienable "right to bear arms." For a third of the book, my opinion did not change. In a sense, Bakal's case was self-defeating. Firstly, the problem is almost insoluble (except by control of ammunition) if, as he says, "It is estimated . . . that there are more than 50 million privately owned guns in the United States today. Some estimates place the figure at 200 million, and one as high as a billion."

Secondly, Bakal's recurrent theme is that President Kennedy's tragic assassination could have been prevented if Lee Harvey Oswald had not been able to buy his cheap Italian Carcano rifle by mail-order. Some people, including myself, never believed that Texas, armed to the teeth, was so pusillanimous as to need Oswald to do its dirty work. It now appears that Oswald was a bad shot, the rifle was hopelessly defective, and the rapidity of fire was mechanically impossible; hence Oswald certainly did not kill the President alone, and probably not at all. The actual conspirators were certainly deadly serious men, possibly members of a Dallas gun club, certainly magnificent shots, and their weapons were not mail-order guns. The men who killed President Kennedy knew their business; Oswald, the joker, did not. (Aiming downhill is a very severe test of marksmanship, which few gunners can pass.)

Thus, Bakal's most sensational argument is off the mark. The mass murder by Charles Whitman in Austin, Texas, is also irrelevant. The gun is here to stay; it will occasionally be used for its pristine purpose: to kill. But surely a decent society has the right to know who has the guns, and to cross-examine them a little bit as to why they need a gun.

Any such statement as the above drives the National Rifle Association into a cold rage. When Bakal exposes the incredibly successful machinations of this unacknowledged lobby, he completely wins me over. I also listened to their champions on the Barry Gray radio program in New York, one being Gray himself, and easily recognized the voice of villainy.

The National Rifle Association at first glance appears to be a body of 700,000 irreproachable American patriots, affiliated with about 140,000 gun clubs. Their civic position, with which I agree, is that the American citizen is sovereign. But from this acceptable platform, the National Rifle Association has progressed in some thirty years to the megalomaniac conviction that its members are the only patriots and the sole sovereign power in this republic, and that any gun law whatsoever is treasonous, Communist, sacrilegious and insulting and to be thwarted by any means, even to ostensible cooperation with the law-makers, hypocrisy, and treachery. Mr. Bakal has documented this shameful history in punctilious detail. After this, a decent member of the National Rifle Association would resign or put his head in the oven. Not one will do either.

It is a fact that the mere possession of a gun does something very odd and undesirable to some people. Bank robbers at Leavenworth said: "To a stickup man, God is his gun, and when he forgets this he's riding for a terrible fall." "To me the gun . . . is an end which satisfies all my insatiable drives . . . I feel like God . . . you grasp this tremendous insight into absolute truth." The National Rifle Association seems to have had a similar "tremendous insight into absolute truth," and probably for the same reason: they too have guns.

One argument against gun licensing, once given by me in the form, "The Nazis' war against the underground was greatly facilitated by the lists of licensed gun owners in the town halls of conquered western Europe," is dismissed by Bakal. On careful inquiry, he could find no record of the Nazis' using these lists. Having been too credulous once, I would just like this detail double-checked. In the same place I wrote, "The walkdown in the West was simply bad-tempered bluff-calling, like a crude duel . . . The custom did not contribute much to the winning of the West." When I read Mr. Bakal's sentence, "The long, wary walk down a dusty main street . . . was usually nothing more than a bluff-calling charade of a duel . . . and the crude custom certainly had nothing whatever to do with the winning of the West," I looked for my name in his bibliography, in vain. In any case the point is valid. The gun as a substitute for virility is a disgrace to the American man.

American gun killings come to 9 per 100,000 of population every year, as against rates in other civilized countries of from nearly zero (Netherlands) to about three (France, Sweden, Canada). The annual American figures are roughly: 5,000 homicides, 10,000 suicides, 2,000

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accidents, or about 17,000 deaths a year. The National Rifle Association would take this slaughter for a proof of American manliness. On this basis, the manhood or killing rate is highest in the American South, lowest in the Northeast. By age groups, the manliest or most dangerous is a 15-year-old boy, closely followed by 14-year-olds. One of the latter admitted to seven accidental shootings in his five years of "hunting."

Bakal makes the universally observed point that hunters are the worst-mannered of all sportsmen: trespass, vandalism, indiscriminate killing, shooting in populated places, not to speak of killing one another in large numbers. This fact contrasts with the gunners' claim that hunting teaches every virtue.

The terrible need for a strong Federal law is completely proved by "The Right to Bear Arms." The power over Congress of the National Rifle Association must be countered by the rest of the people. The NFA's membership combines the most respectable men and a howling rabble; Congress is evidently impressed by the simultaneous use of the soft sell and the bloodthirsty baying of the mongrel pack, expressed in thousands of letters to Congress, evoked by a single signal from the National Rifle Association.

As against this monotonous virile keening, consider one story, not in this book, of a Boston mother who had gone so far as to nag her ten-year-old son to do his nightly homework. She opened a letter for her son, which indicated that a gun mail-order house wanted a small additional remittance before shipping the son a gun. When she asked the child why he had sent for a gun, he replied, "I don't like the way you bother me about my homework." Shooting her, the boy would have "killed" her only in a fantasy sense, and expected her to give him breakfast the next morning. But in fact, with the benediction of the National Rifle Association, her manly little boy would have actually killed her dead. No breakfast. Ever.

One such episode in a normal American home must turn the brazen virilities of the National Rifle Association into a lethal obscenity. No statistics are needed. One is enough.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 67)

the Commission's report continues with the rather important question: "Will this [proposed reform] in fact be the case?" The reply immediately following the question is: "Only time can tell . . . the Commission intends to keep the operation of the new regulations under close observation for several years."

Even Dr. John Meng (a fellow lay vice president, this time of Fordham U., whom Opulente cunningly tries to relieve of the need to explain the exact character of his communications with Archbishop Cody in behalf of St. John's University) in his 1966 Commencement address at St. John's University refers to "those members of the faculty who were *suspended* from their teaching duties," and comments: "The lack of academic due process in the procedures used . . . seems clear and evident . . . I believe along with most of the academic profession that the University was at fault. . . ."

There seems to be little hope that this loyal lay executive vice president of St. John's, stamped with a doctorate from the same place, will ever deviate from the Tinnelly programming.

(REV.) PETER O'REILLY

"Curious"

Eatontown, N.J.

To the Editors: . . . In the first of his seven points, Dr. Opulente states "No teacher was 'summarily dismissed' last December; moreover, some teachers have been rehired." I am curious to learn how one can be rehired after not having been dismissed in the first place. Perhaps this is just one more of St. John's University's unique personnel practices.

All the explanations Dr. Opulente can produce will not erase the fact that St. John's University has committed the academic scandal of the decade. What is saddest about the whole situation is that the Catholic community, by and large, has chosen to look the other way.

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Among contemporary Catholics, in regard to this and other issues, the imitation of Christ seems to have been replaced by the imitation of Pontius Pilate. JOHN MORRESSY

"A Vital Nerve"

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Mr. Callahan has again successfully touched a vital nerve, perhaps the heart, of much contemporary theology ["Religious Slum-Dwellers," Aug. 19]. . . .

1) The thinkers referred to (The "Marechalian Thomists") are not primarily interested in private experiences or esoteric religious moments but with the transcendental conditions, in Kant's sense, for ineluctable and everyday experiences.

2) The motif which dominates the rather detailed analysis of a Rahner or a Lonergan (and seminally, a Blondel) is that everyday experience is much more than it obviously seems to be and that this "much more" is the necessary condition for the very obviousness; i.e., the pre-thematic, the horizontal, the unarticulated, the fringe "meanings" are in a very real sense constitutive of the obvious object or readily narrated experience. Mr. Callahan would have to argue against these thinkers not in terms of the obvious content of experience but in terms of their explication of the unthematized aspects of obvious ineluctable experiences. . . .

Thus the "infinity theologians" must be attacked primarily on the ground they themselves have chosen to defend: the pre-thematic. The preoccupation with this theme is not restricted to persons oriented towards metaphysics and/or phenomenology but, of course, psychoanalysis and even linguistic philosophy (cf. Wittgenstein's and Austin's preoccupations with the "feel" of the language and the *Lebenstrom*) consider it as central. The point, then, is that Mr. Callahan must not only refer to what he considers as his obvious private experiences of the exclusively finite and profane but he must (more philosophically?) take issue with the rather careful arguments that his everydayness is laden with the unobvious, the pre-conceptual and in a sense the much known-unknown.

3) The thinkers in question, especially Rahner and de Lubac (we might add Blondel, Malevez Alfaro, and Bouillard) do, on occasion refer to the "transcendental experience" meaning something rather special. Mr. Callahan admits its possibility because of the abundant testimony to its reality from various sources. For these thinkers, however, the context (for the most part) for their discussion of a "transcendental experience," in the sense or approximating the sense of Mr. Callahan, is the transcendental conditions on the side of man for his "supernatural life" or his act of faith. Rahner argues that man must as "obediential potency" be in essence a listener to and hearer of the Word in history if faith is to be man's faith. Bouillard (cf. the final volume of his work, *Karl Barth*) argues that we must have a pre-thematic knowledge of God if we are going to know our faith is the effect of a miracle, an action, of God and not an arbitrary human decision. . . .

4) Now from the point of view of Mr. Callahan this would be circular, as it is for Mr. Hamilton *et alii* when they claim that they cannot understand transcendence-talk and that they must unfortunately be outside the gnostic circle. But this objection is against the last argument, i.e., that an experience of the transcendent (in the obvious sense) is had by all as the necessary condition for their faith.

There are, then, several distinct discussions to be undertaken. There must be a philosophical rebuttal to the claim that our ordinariness is experienceable—as such—by reason of the pre-thematic experience of what is extraordinary or unconditioned. Further it must be determined whether this approach to God-talk leads us to a Feuerbachian stalemate or whether as the thinkers in question argue there is an objective necessity for the existence of "God" as the basis for the experiences of *Alltaglichkeit*.

If the line of argument of the Marechalian Thomists holds then the "God is Dead" theologians are wrong in their claim to have never had an experience of the transcendent, but may be either right or wrong in their claim that they have no meaningful experience of the gracious God of revelation; i.e., the miracle of faith may not have occurred (or stopped occurring) for them. If Mr. Callahan *et alii* can demonstrate that the thinkers in question are wrong or inadequate in their philosophical considerations of the unthematic then his claim to have never experienced anything like the "experience of being" is well-supported.

But at that stage he must, it would seem, wrestle with the question of how we know the revelation of God is genuine and not our psychic fancy or gastro-

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nomic disorder without such an *a priori* criterion. Of course his recent discussions in *Commonweal* have been around this precise point. The answer given by Rahner *et alii* is circular in so far as they claim to know in faith that this is the Word of God and therefore man must be able to recognize it in an arbitrary way. . . .

In any case if Mr. Callahan feels that there is no philosophical justification for an experience of the transcendent, and if the richest experience of which he is capable is only an enrichment and extension of the usually limited experience of the realities and possibilities of the human community (thereby excluding the Neo-Orthodox position also) then he has the personal problem of justifying why he should want to persist in regarding himself as a Christian, for it is almost meaningless to wish to change Christianity's self-understanding in terms of a private difficulty.

5) The liberal or Neo-Orthodox polarities of Protestant and Roman Catholic theologies (if we may suggest this to be an exhaustive typology of all traditional "orthodox" theologies) have demanded some experience of the transcendent which was other than a mere human objectification or extrapolation. The far left has always veered towards an "atheistic humanism," the far right towards an agnostic, mystic, cloud of unknowing. Thus they have both, in their ways flirted with atheism. At the same time, however, they have, it seems, set down minimum requirements for formal membership in the believing and theological community. The person who earnestly protests his total inability to think of anything other than the secular and the ordinary after all the distinctions have been made would seem to be one of the clearest instances we have for what is known as an atheist in the history of modern Christian thought. . . .

6) My personal problem is understanding what all the *theological* fuss is about. That our age is secular and growing more so is a crucial pastoral and, indeed, serious theological problem. However, I do not see why the absence of, to use an old phrase, "a lively faith" on the part of certain theologians should arrogate itself to the front line of theological issues. In a certain sense (quite academic, please) who cares about Dr. X's loss of faith or immersion in secularism? His assertions on the absence of an experience of the transcendent are disturbing of course from various perspectives. But the academic issue seems to be the very old one of natural theology vs. atheism, the motives for the act of faith vs. rationalism (or whatever label fits best). In summary, each serious theologian must muscle up to the question of a pre-thematic knowledge of God and the problem of whether Christianity has any possible meaning if the position is acceptable that there is no experience of the transcendent. I hope Mr. Callahan continues to pursue the issue and prod the theologians. JAMES G. HART

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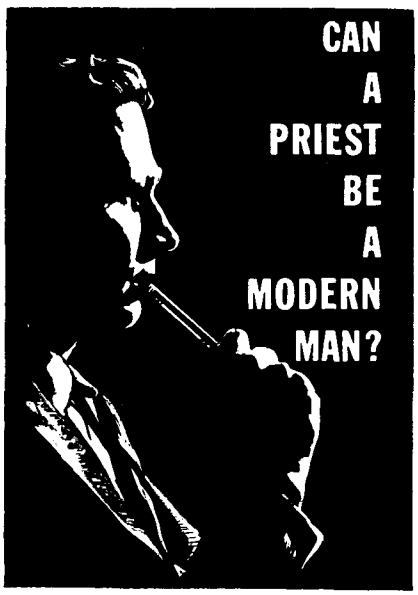

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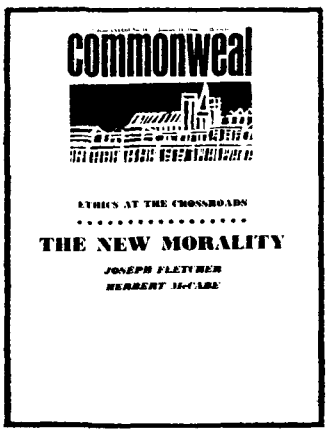

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